1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 260-A]

539
114 and by others. Although only a limited though representative selection of the legends is presented, a word should be said about the way the legends are told and the way these particular examples were collected and translated (Turnbull, 1959).

539
114
126 The original manuscripts were prepared under extremely difficult conditions by Mrs. Putnam while living in one of the Mbuti hunting camps. No typewriter was available. Apart from the physical difficulty of making a longhand rendition of the legends, as they were told, was the problem of translation. Mrs. Putnam did the only thing anyone except a proficient linguist could do, she translated the legend as it was told and wrote it down in English. This
[91] procedure was further necessitated by the habit of these Mbuti, who speak three languages, of changing in the telling of a single legend from one to another as the mood seizes them.

539
114 Certainly, the ideal would have been to record the original texts, but these we do not have and could hardly expect to have under the circumstances. But we can be sure of the content and the general form of expression. I myself worked on the original manuscripts shortly af-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1960) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.iv]

The Natural History Press, publisher for The American Museum of Natural History, is a division of Doubleday & Company, Inc. Directed by a joint editorial board made up of members of the staff of both the Museum and Doubleday, the Natural History Press publishes books and periodicals in all branches of the life and earth sciences, including anthropology and astronomy. The Natural History Press has its editorial offices at The American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, New York 24, New York, and its business offices at 501 Franklin Avenue, Garden City, New York.

[126] The photographs for this book were taken by the author; the [128] line illustrations were prepared by Nicholas Amoroso of The American Museum of Natural History.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 65-17265
Copyright © 1965 by Colin Turnbull
All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America

2: Turnbull E-5 (1961-1966) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

Upon establishing what was, for me, the first hunting camp of the year, there commenced what I might here call the real mourning festivities, as opposed to the festivities imposed upon the Mbuti when in the village. One of the persons to die had been an old and much respected and beloved Mbuti lady, Balekimito. Her death was made the occasion for a great *molimo* festival, which within the first three months of my field trip brought me right to the heart of the Mbuti magico-religious system. Subsequent investigation elsewhere, even among archer bands, revealed a degree of similarity that makes it possible to generalize widely from the base of this single band study, in this realm at least.

I followed the same band throughout its entire series of migrations, living in every camp it established during the course of some fourteen months. During this time the band was sometimes entirely in residence in the Epulu village, in which case I was there with it; on occasion it was entirely in the forest, and sometimes it was divided between the two. When it divided I simply had to distribute my attentions as the occasion seemed to demand. Sometimes I was able to make use of an informant in the other division, and I trained three Mbuti youths for this purpose.

On two occasions I was able to take quick side trips to other parts of the forest, but I left the bulk of my search for comparative material among other bands until I felt that one complete annual cycle had been completed. It so happened that the process of fission and fusion was more systemized than I had anticipated, and my records of consecutive changes in the composition of the hunting band clearly showed the pattern in time for me to be able to spend a few months in different parts of the forest, with both net-hunters and archers, and even allowed me to make a brief excursion to the Kivu district and to Ruanda and Burundi, though the material gathered there was not immediately comparable.

FIELD TECHNIQUE

Before myself assessing the results, and in order to enable others to assess and evaluate the material here presented, it is important that field method should be discussed. The particular technique I employed was born of the particular situation. I do not claim that any other technique was impossible, but I do claim that for the re-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1961 FO4 Pygmies FO4 Mbuti

village itself was being pressed by the administration to increase its productivity at the same time that it was being pressed to supply the administration with more labor. In turn the villagers tried to press the Mbuti into supplying them with more food. Accustomed to a luxe subsistence economy, the Mbuti could never quite see the necessity, nor did they altogether feel it was right or that it would be pleasing to the forest. Their belief, as far as I could determine, was not so much that they would be punished by the forest, but rather that the hunt would "be closed," that they would not get the unlawful surplus, that they might not even get enough for themselves.

To counter this the villagers offered divers kinds of medicine[9] for use in the forest, and agreed to make even more powerful medicine in the village. Sometimes the villagers offer to come into the forest, with a ritual specialist, to make medicine. The Mbuti tend to allow this, as it is profitable to them. Occasionally, however, the habit lingers, and whether or not *anjo* was originally a village or an Mbuti custom, it is now considered as a village trick, and disliked as such. *Anjo* is made by taking an antelope horn and filling it with a paste made from special parts of the antelope, charred black. This paste is then applied with a stick to the body of the hunter, to convey to him the senses of the animal.

This custom could sit perfectly well among the archers, where hunting is on a more individual basis. But among the net-hunters its use was taken as a sign of desire for personal gain above communal gain. On one occasion, when the hunting was not particularly good, *anjo* horns were rounded up from all over the camp, eight in all, and destroyed in the central fire. There was some protest from the owners, but not much. It was generally agreed that this made everyone the same, and that was how things should be.

From all the above, and from the rest of the disputes recorded in my notes, totalling 124, not counting the petty daily squabbles of no apparent import other than as an indication of bad temper, one of the most significant features is the small number of cases in which any

[9] Among these medicines is that encouraged by the Arab slave traders in search of ivory, specifically to give success in the elephant hunt. Known as *enumba*, *lubumba*, and divers other spellings, it is sometimes confused with a love medicine of the same name, and even more frequently with the *molimo* of the Mbuti, the word *enumba* or *lumumba* being used to describe the Mbuti *molimo* when speaking in KiNgwana, language of the Arabized Bantu tribe. It is perfectly possible that the two practices became intermingled, both, from the Mbuti point of view, being concerned with the pleasure of the forest.

In Turnbull E-5 (1951-1960) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

attempt is made to settle the issue in question one way or the other, even verbally, and the equally small number in which direct action is taken. The percentages are given as follows:

DISPUTE	*Number Recorded*	*Number of Decisions or Judgments made*	*Instances of Positive Action*
Food	67	5 (7.5%)	4 (5.9%)
Sex	37	4 (10.8%)	5 (13.5%)
Village	11	1 (9.1%)	1 (9.1%)
Theft	5	3 (60%)	
Territory	4		3 (75%)

These figures indicate the greatest degree of decision, either by the passing of opinions (judgments) or by the taking of action, in the least frequent types of dispute.

In the most common disputes of all, those arising out of trivia and having no particular direction and no specific purpose, it is only about one in a hundred that comes to a head in a way that calls for action or decision, such as the case of the two brothers (34). Such disputes gave frequent opportunity for the voicing of opinions on almost any matter, and acted as a mechanism by which most incipient disputes of a more serious nature were detected and aired before they grew to major proportions.

An examination of all the recorded disputes shows that without a doubt there are forces working toward order in Mbuti society, despite its unformalized nature and the absence of political or legal "systems." Such forces include the compelling demands of the stomach, which suffers directly from any dispute that interrupts the hunting and gathering economy, as any major dispute will; the weight of public opinion, expressed verbally, or through ridicule or mime, or in action such as thrashing (rare, and only for youths) or ostracism and exile. These are the negative forces against antisocial behavior. There are equally positive forces toward social behavior, including the esteem of one's age mates and elders, the affection of children, the contentment of a full stomach and, perhaps above all, the belief in the personal benevolence of the forest.[10] The positive aspect of the

[10] Fortune (1935) describes a parallel situation among the Manus, who, like the Mbuti, respect morality beyond the pressures of social sanctions. Fortune claims that the religious sanctions provide a socially established way of keeping the social sentiment "quick," and of bringing offenders to book without seeming to be personal. The latter aspect of religious sanctions is probably more vital for the Mbuti, where any dispute is

3t Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

a tangle of fallen trees and ever-spreading vines and creepers. Here and there where the *fato*—the sapling used by villagers for building their houses—had once grown, the tangle was even worse. Once the forest is cut it grows up again, not as the mighty primeval forest it was, but as a jungle of secondary vegetation that in places is almost impenetrable. We went in single file, for the most part following a path; when we left it the youths in front flashed their hatchets above their heads, slashing away overhanging branches and vines without even slowing up, to make it easier for us to follow. But where they cut they left sharp jagged ends sticking out at just about eye-level for me. When newly cut these dangerous points are plainly visible and easy to avoid, but when they become old and dirty they are a real menace.

After about half an hour we reached the place where the more ambitious Pygmies had tried to make a plantation; this was the farthest point from the new village of Epulu that the Negroes had reached when searching for the wood to build their houses. Beyond this they did not care to venture, except for an occasional one such as Kaweki, who made his living by trapping fish in the forest streams, and those who came to help him or to carry his fish to the market. Beyond this point, in Negro eyes, the forest was evil—full of animals, malevolent spirits, and Pygmies.

But for the people of the forest the world began at this point. There was a stream nearby, just beyond the "plantation," near a site where I had recorded the forest songs of these same Pygmies* three years earlier. In this stream, for no obvious reason, each of the five youths washed carefully, as though literally ridding their very feet of the dust of the village. Then they splashed through the cool, clear water and set off again with even greater vigor than before.

* Folkways Records: FE 4457, Pygmies of the Ituri Forest
FE 4489, Music of the Ituri Forest

3t Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

352 the same way, the frame resting on four forked sticks, but we were
the only household to bother with a table. The others would build
[251] them later, Kenge said, when the hunting brought in so much meat
that they could spare some to dry for the villagers. Then they would
build tables higher than ours, and light fires under them.

[284] Chairs were even simpler to make. Kenge cut four sticks, each
about three and a half feet long, and twisted a vine thong around
the middle of the bundle. He stood them on the ground, and with
a turn of his hand he splayed out the ends and had a comfortable
352 seat. When you get used to this kind of chair you can even go to
516 sleep, resting your back along one stick and hooking your feet over
515 the opposite one. Pygmies, in the forest, are clean people, and they
do not like sitting on the ground. Either they make these simple
chairs or they sit on logs, often on the end of a log that is sticking
out of a fire. If the worst comes to the worst they will pull a leaf
from the roof of the nearest hut and sit daintily on that.

361 During the day more families arrived, and while they were busy
578 building their huts, those who had arrived the day before put the
finishing touches to theirs. Sometimes someone would apparently
have a grudge against a neighbor, or a dislike for someone who had
built a hut opposite. I saw several women turning the entrances of
their huts to point in different directions, toward friends or relatives.
During the course of any one camp women are continually adding
• [126] to their huts or changing the way they face. I found that a good
way of keeping track of the little jealousies that exist in any small
community was to make a daily plan of the camp, noting which
huts were being altered to face in which direction. I noticed that
Arobanai, Ekianga's senior wife, faced her hut very deliberately
away from old Sau, and that nobody was anxious to make use of the
space between Sau's hut and mine to build there.

361 On the third day Ekianga arrived with Kamaikan, and they in-